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various methods and devices outlined in this article. Whether any of these are ever used in exactly the suggested form is a matter of small consequence. The point of vital importance is the realization on the part of both teacher and pupil that language teaching, as indeed all teaching, is empty effort if limited to the mere acquisition of facts, without the development of at least some measure of power to use even very elementary facts for some higher aim. There is often more enjoyment obtained from a few scattering rays of sunshine penetrating the darkness than from the full glare of light upon a lofty summit. Who would wait to quench his thirst until he could drink the ocean dry?

The Practical Study of Phonetics.

By **E. Spanhoff**, St. Paul's School, Concord, N. H.

(Concluded.)

(4) The basis of articulation.

A further result of this practical study of phonetics is the recognition of the organic basis of one's own language as differing from that of other languages. In continued speech we can imagine our organs assuming a sort of neutral position from which they can most easily form the various articulations required. This is called the organic basis or basis of articulation. It stands to reason that in a language that forms most of its sounds in the front of the mouth, the tongue, which is the articulating organ *par excellence* will be drawn forward; whereas in a language with prevailing back articulations the organic basis will be further back in the mouth. This is the case in English, with the result that the tongue, being habitually drawn back from the teeth, does not articulate as far forward for the so-called dentals, *d, t, l*, as to really reach the teeth. This backward formation gives these English consonants a dull muffled sound, which produces a particular offensive effect in French, where the organic basis lies very far forward; the German taking an intermediate position between these two languages. In order to realize this dulling effect one need only accumulate such sounds in a short phrase. For instance, the well known line, "Didon dina, dit-on, du dos d'un dodu dindon" sounds much clearer when spoken with the dental *d* of the French. Likewise the phrase, "Ton thé t'at-t-il ôté ta toux" sounds different when pronounced with the French *t*. And so with *l*. "Elle laisse le lait au laboratoire là-bas." Especially with final *l* which is very much retracted in English, "L'hirondelle a-t-elle les ailes longues?" It does not merely sound more like French; it is also easier in combination with other forward French sounds. I should consider it rather difficult to pronounce such French

words as *pulule*, *ululer* with an English *l*; as the lip-rounding of the *u* draws the tongue so far forward, that it has too far to travel to reach the English *l*-position.

The German *zet* often sounds rather weak in English mouths. The effect is not pleasing if there are a number of *zets* in a phrase like "Die zahmen Ziegen zeigen ihre zarten Zungen", as can be easily noticed if it is pronounced with a good dental *t*. Contrast the effect this and the above French phrases produce on the ear by pronouncing them first with the English *d*, *l* and *zt* (*z—ts*) and then with the proper French or German sounds.

One can teach the organic basis of a language most easily by singling out one very characteristic sound, pronouncing it with a constant and conscious realization of its articulation. The French *u*, for instance, will draw not only the lips, but also the tongue and the rest of the vocal organs forward into the French organic basis. Before reading or speaking French recite the passé défini of avoir, j'eus, tu eus, etc., then as a test say the phrase, "Didon dina, dit-on, du dos d'un dodu dindon" and you will find that your organs of speech are set for the time being for the production of a good French accent.

For the German a sentence with a number of *z*'s will serve the same purpose. "Die Ziegen zeigen ihre zarten Zungen."

Is a perfect accent in a foreign language possible?

If language is a habit, the acquisition of a good French or German accent means the habitual use of the French or German basis of articulation. If we do this we shall lose to the same extent our native mode of sound production. After a prolonged sojourn abroad we find some difficulty in recovering the organic basis of our mother tongue and our friends remark on the foreign accent with which we speak. To this extent there is certainly a drawback in speaking a foreign language too well.

The French aristocrats who had to leave their country during the revolution are said to have refused steadfastly to learn the languages of the countries where they sought refuge. They wished to keep their French accent intact for they felt that after the restoration of order it would devolve upon them to continue the tradition of the pure and elegant language that had been the pride of the French court for so many years. It seems to me that they were quite justified in considering undesirable the acquisition of un-French habits of pronunciation, for have we not all heard people speak their native English with a foreign accent, simply because the language of their nurseries had been French or German?

Habits seem to be just as easy to acquire as they are hard to give up. If that sounds like a paradox, the truth may be that we are never quite able to give up a habit that we have once acquired; a sub-conscious rem-

nant of it will always remain with us. Common experience will bear me out in this statement. For there are very few people who do not show by their speech from what part of the country they come. I think we all like these dialectal variations provided they do not depart too far from the accepted standard of pronunciation.

On the other hand, though we ought not to feel annoyed or ashamed if our Americanism is found out in the foreign countries whose languages we know and like to use, we ought to know that we can rid ourselves of our American habits of speech only to a certain extent and that we are bound to retain American peculiarities just as a Southerner retains southern peculiarities. When a foreigner tells us that we speak his language with a good accent, he generally means that we come as near to his standard of pronunciation as it is possible for one not to the manner born.

To what extent, then, can we succeed in teaching a French or German accent to our pupils?

In the first place we must not expect too much; we must not expect that we can teach them in our classes to speak French or German like natives, and principally we must not allow people to expect that from us or from them. Our work in this respect is often unjustly criticized by people who have no conception of the difficulties of the task.

There are, however, a few things that we can and must teach. In the first place we must see to it that our pupils produce correctly the sounds of the language they study or else they are not able to speak it so that they can be easily understood by the natives. In the second place we must impress upon them the necessity of articulating a foreign language from a new organic basis if they wish to pronounce it smoothly and fluently; and thirdly and principally, we must so train their ears to the foreign sounds that they recognize them without fail whenever they hear them. In other words, we must teach them so that with what they have learned from us they can go to the country where the language is spoken and from the start be able to understand it and make themselves understood in it. As to the finer touches, they must be left to be attended to by the foreign environment.

I do not wish you to understand that I advocate a complete course of phonetics to be given in our modern language classes. If we, the teachers, have some practical knowledge of it, the two or three years which our pupils need to master the difficulties of the grammar and the vocabulary will afford ample time for giving them, whenever an occasion arises, a little phonetic training, which generally need not go beyond an occasional "Round your lips" or "Put your tongue against your teeth."

But in my judgment, we, the teachers, need all the phonetic knowledge

and practice that a continuous study of this science can give us. Without it our mastery of the foreign pronunciation cannot be as complete as it ought to be. We ought to remember that our pupils never hear the foreign language spoken except by us, that we, therefore, have to supply them with all that environment can give them in the foreign country, that we, in other words, are the only foreign environment that is at their command.

We ought to speak the foreign language we teach as well as possible, and let me add, as much as possible. One of the greatest obstacles to the acquisition of an even tolerable pronunciation is the practice of changing constantly from the vernacular to the foreign language and vice versa. This practice makes it impossible to keep the organs of speech set for the required basis of articulation. Our aim, therefore, should be to discard as much as possible the vernacular so that no other sounds are heard or uttered in our classrooms than those of the language studied.

This brings me to the end of my paper, which I hope adds another to the many arguments in favor of the use of the direct method of language teaching, a subject that has occupied us in these meetings more or less during the last five years.

Gerlingua.

Ein neues Märchen.

Vor vielen, vielen Jahren kam mit den deutschen Einwanderern ein liebes kleines Mädchen in dieses Land. Das Mädchen war eigentlich unsichtbar, und doch war es überall gegenwärtig, wo immer sich die deutschen Fremdlinge hier niederliessen. Fanden sich aber ihrer mehrere an einem Orte zusammen, da war die gesprächige Kleine mitten unter ihnen, und jedermann war ihr hold, denn sie wusste allezeit so munter und traulich zu plaudern und auch gar innig zu singen jene lustigen und wehmütigen Lieder von der alten Heimat jenseits des grossen Meeres. Da gingen aller Herzen auf und sie vergassen der Kummernisse im neuen fremden Lande.

Gerlingua aber — so hiess das Mädchen, oder kurz Gerla genannt — wuchs mit den Jahren zu einer stattlichen Jungfrau heran. Sie war bald keine Fremde mehr im fremden Lande. Allenthalben wurde Gerla von ihren Stammesgenossen hier in Liebe und Treue gepflegt; ja selbst die Eingeborenen dieses Landes gewannen das Mädchen aus der Fremde lieb und hörten ihm gerne zu, wenn es die schönen deutschen Märchen, Sagen und Legenden erzählte. Und wie andächtig lauschten alle Gerlinguas herzinnigen Heimatsliedern! Am Ohiostrande aber und insbesondere am Gestade des Michigansees hatte man sogar eigene Stätten errichtet, allwo Ritter und Edelfräulein zu Dienst und Pflege Gerlinguas herangebildet wurden. Ihr, der stolzen Schönen zu Ehren wurden auch viele frohe Feste gefeiert, woselbst ihr Lob laut erklang.

So lebte hier die Jungfrau viele Jahre geliebt und geachtet, und selbst die heranwachsende Jugend dieses Landes lernte mancherorts Gerlinguas herrliche Sprache und Lieder. Da brach in Gerlas alter Heimat ein schrecklicher Krieg aus. Schon drei Jahre dauerte das wüste Würgen; ja es breitete